

Leadership Awards

The annual **AYA Leadership Awards for Volunteer Innovation and Service** are made for outstanding individual service. Unlike the AYA Board of Governors Excellence Awards, which are made by the Board to alumni groups after a careful evaluation, these awards are made to individuals who are nominated and then voted on by the AYA staff, the professionals who have seen the passion of their nominees first-hand. This provides the AYA's front-line workers with a way of recognizing each year the extraordinary accomplishments of at least a few of the many "Ambassadors for Yale"—the outstanding volunteers who have demonstrated a willingness to give back, a penchant for innovation, and a high level of selfless service on Yale's behalf.

The following individuals are being presented with these awards for the 2012–2013 year.

Christina Coffin

Long been a dependable volunteer for the Yale Club of New Haven, Chris Coffin '74 currently serves there as Club Secretary. But she has also stepped into broader leadership responsibilities, coordinating the Yale Club of New Haven's participation in the Day of Service for the last six years — a program with nearly 20 sites and 250 alumni volunteers across the city annually — managing to visit almost every site every year. Indeed, back when the Day of Service was being piloted in 2008, the whole question of whether it could be "rolled out" worldwide depended on how smoothly things went in New Haven. By the end of the day, its success under her leadership convinced the AYA that the program had a future. ¶ For several years, Ms. Coffin was the coordinator of YCNH's Community Service Fellowships, another example of her ability to skillfully navigate relationships among several partners to get the work done. More recently, she has gotten involved with the Yale Alumni College, working



tirelessly to publicize the program's offerings to Yale alumni in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey. She is, in short, the kind of persistent, behind-the-scenes, spotlight-avoiding leader that every organization needs.

Conner Fay

As the Service Projects Coordinator for the Yale Alumni Association of Western North Carolina, Conner Fay '51 has been instrumental in encouraging his fellow Yalies to realize what an impact they could make in their local community. Beginning in the spring of 2012, at Conner's urging, YAAWNC "adopted" an underprivileged local school in Asheville. Seeking to maximize the Club's effectiveness by focusing on one site, Conner has overseen an astonishing range of activities by local members of the Yale family engaging in the life of the school, including work days, community service, garden clean-ups, painting and landscaping, and an innovative "Jackie Robinson project" that has energized the student body. He has also mobilized Club members individually to tutor math and reading, staff book fairs, mentor children, and take students to baseball games. ¶ And as if this weren't enough, Mr. Fay has spearheaded YAAWNC's efforts to raise funds and friends for the school in support of its library, chess club and other student activities. His team also worked with the principal to develop fundraising materials and identify potential foundation and government funding.



AYA Awards for Volunteer Leadership & Service

Ken Inadomi

In the past few years Ken Inadomi '76 has tackled several significant leadership roles with enthusiasm. From 2009 to 2012 he served as an At-Large Delegate to the AYA Assembly, and this year he joined the AYA Board of Governors. On the Board, he has focused on assessing opportunities for a leadership forum program that might generate revenue to support AYA programs, and helping to develop the Yale Alumni College. ¶ But Mr. Inadomi is perhaps best known for his leadership role in the Yale Alumni Nonprofit Alliance (YANA), which he founded in 2011. In the group's early years he helped match members with roles that seemed a good fit for their interests, then supporting them going forward with needed resources. He has helped connect YANA with other university groups, particularly the Yale Alumni Association of New York, persuading Yalies not already engaged in alumni activities to take a more active role. As one volunteer puts it, "Ken's warm, encouraging, low-key style helps smooth over the rough edges that inevitably take place within a group, even one with the best of intentions. He helps keep everyone on track, motivated, always growing and reaching toward the next level."



Michael Madison

While Mike Madison '83 served with distinction for many years on the AYA Board of Governors, including as immediate past chair, his nomination for this award focuses on his outstanding work shepherding the new AYA Strategic Plan into being over the last few years. From engaging fellow Board members and AYA staff to seeking input from University Vice President Linda Lorimer and other Yale leaders, and then on to the actual writing and revising process, he brought wisdom, political savvy and true passion to the entire project. ¶ As one AYA staffer comments,



"I'm not sure we would have a new plan if it weren't for his leadership. As we all know from our work with the many alumni groups in the AYA universe, to have a volunteer this invested in the strategic vision of the organization is extraordinary. Mike truly walked the walk on Strategic Plan 2.0, and the AYA will be the better for it in the years to come."

Robert Mitchell

From being president and ASC Director of the Yale Club of Alaska to serving as a member of the AYA Board of Governors (2003–2006) and regional director and site coordinator for the Yale Day of Service, Bob Mitchell '54, '60 ArtA embraces every opportunity to give back to Yale. In the words of one AYA staffer, "Despite the many ways he serves, Bob is not a flashy or high-profile leader. He just steps up to the plate and gets the job done... and some of the jobs he does are real challenges! Running a Yale Club spread over more than half a million square miles is not an easy task, nor is directing a Day of Service region extending from Alaska and Hawaii to South Dakota and Utah. But Bob is never discouraged. He sees each new year as an opportunity to share his enthusiasm for Yale with a new group of potential volunteers. And as a result, leaders emerge in what might be considered unlikely places." ¶ Based in Anchorage, Mr. Mitchell is deeply involved in his local community, and sees the Day of Service as a great way to meld his love for Yale and his city. He is the kind of steady leader who forms the foundation of a volunteer organization like the AYA — willing to do the behind-the-scenes work that needs to be done, even if it isn't glamorous.

